

RUAG Sees New Interest in Dornier 228s

A resurgence of interest in the updated Dornier 228 NG from commuter airlines has prompted RUAG Aviation to consider producing another batch of the twin-turboprop multirole aircraft.

"We want to presell the next batch before we go ahead with it, but then keep on selling for another batch afterward," say company executives.

Airframe structures for the 19-seat Dornier 228 NG are made by Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd (HAL) in India, then shipped to RUAG in Oberpfaffenhofen, Germany, for outfitting and completion as airliners or special-mission aircraft. That partnership evidently is strengthening again after earlier comments in public about HAL's performance; RUAG now has staff in India to help ensure quality.

The next batch of aircraft will be manufactured by HAL. "We are in discussions for 10 to 15 aircraft with four customers in Southeast Asia and South America," say the executives. "Some of them are interested in up to eight aircraft. We already have an agreement signed for four aircraft with deposits, but we are looking for a bigger batch."

RUAG has just delivered its sixth Dornier 228 NG, which is the second aircraft for the Bangladesh Navy. It will be deployed for maritime air patrol and rescue missions along the country's 580-km coastline. Both are highly customized with special mission sensor equipment, including a 360° surveillance radar, Telephonics RDR-1700B radar and operator console as well as HF, VHF/UHF and VHF FM radios. A search-and-rescue (SAR) direction



Signing for New Central Airservice's second Dornier 228 NG are (L to R) Thomas K. Schilliger, VP of commercial programs at RUAG; Masami Okabe, CFO at NCA; and Yuji Okuyama, general manager of RUAG's Japanese distributor Sojitz Aerospace.

finder, six observer seats and two bubble windows further enhance the aircraft's search and patrol capabilities.

The Bangladesh Navy's Dornier 228 NGs also have a door that can be opened in flight, as well as a marine marker and life raft, enabling them to play an SAR role.

Big news for RUAG is the sale of a second aircraft for Dornier 228 NG launch customer New Central Airservice in Japan. That aircraft will be delivered in early December in airline configuration.

New Central Airservice currently operates three legacy Dornier 228-212 aircraft and one 228 NG. "The fully integrated cockpit of the Dornier 228 NG has been well received by New Central Airservice, which operates in Tokyo's dense airspace, connecting the Tokyo Izu Islands with the city," says Wolfgang Kofen, regional sales director at RUAG Aviation. "The airline has expressed an interest in undertaking

a complete fleet exchange toward the Dornier 228 NG in the forthcoming years."

RUAG's renewed marketing push for the aircraft as a commuter airliner claims that its operating costs, as calculated by Conklin & de Decker, are as much as 15% less than those of the similarly sized de Havilland DHC-6 Twin Otter. Its advantages become most apparent on legs of more than 100 miles, RUAG says.

The company is also adding to the appeal of the aircraft with an improved support network. Here at the show it appointed its first authorized service center, DAO Aviation of Roskilde, Denmark, which has facilities in North America, Africa and Asia for servicing commercial small to medium-size turboprop aircraft worldwide. DAO Aviation is a full European Aviation Safety Agency-certified design (Part 21), maintenance (Part 145) and planning (CAMO) organization as well as an authorized Honeywell heavy service center for the TPE331 engine. —John Morris